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Farm Service Agency

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

*State and Federal
Partnership for
Environmental
Improvement*

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The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a new initiative established as part of the highly successful Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP, administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), is the Federal Government's single largest environmental improvement program.

It protects millions of acres of environmentally sensitive land, increases wildlife habitat, and safeguards ground and surface water.

Since 1986, CRP has encouraged and helped farmers to voluntarily plant long-lasting areas of ground cover on environmentally sensitive cropland. In return for their participation in the program, producers receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. By reducing erosion and runoff, CRP has achieved

notable improvements in water and air quality. The program also has established millions of acres of wildlife habitat, many of them benefiting endangered or threatened species.

What Is CREP?

CREP expands CRP's effectiveness by allowing USDA to work in partnership with States and local interests to meet specific conservation objectives. It is results-oriented, requiring clear program goals and annual monitoring to measure progress and ensure success. Like CRP, CREP contracts require a 10- to 15-year commitment to keeping lands out of agricultural production, ensuring lasting benefits.





Long-Term Protection of Agricultural Land

CREP targets Federal and non-Federal resources for long-term voluntary protection of environmentally sensitive cropland. The program expands the establishment of special high-value CRP practices, such as filter strips and forested riparian buffers, which are planted to protect streams, lakes, and rivers from sedimentation and pollution from agricultural chemicals. Other CREP practices include the establishment or restoration of wetlands and ground cover to provide habitat for threatened wildlife species.

Federal Assistance — Local Leadership

CREP is a community-based program, centered around local participation and leadership, with financial incentives and technical assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The result is an adaptable environmental enhancement effort that focuses on States' specific needs.

CREP is site-specific and addresses high-priority conservation issues of State and national significance. Project development must originate with State and local governments, which also contribute funding, specialized local knowledge, and technical support. CREP is flexible within existing legal constraints and is easily adapted to meet local conditions.

Proposals must be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA conducts interagency reviews of proposals and negotiates final terms with the State. States are initially limited to a total CREP enrollment of 100,000 acres. FSA monitors this ceiling to determine if adjustments are appropriate.



CREP and Landowners

For the landowner, CREP is not just a cost-effective way to address rural environmental problems and meet regulatory requirements. Participation can increase farm income as well.

CREP is convenient for producers because its administration is based on the familiar CRP model. Land must be owned or leased for at least 1 year to be eligible and must be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. Enrollment can be on a continuous basis, permitting applicants to join the program at any time rather than waiting for specific signup periods. To encourage producers to join, the program may offer financial incentives in addition to those available with the regular CRP.



Filter strips and riparian buffers protect streams, lakes, and other bodies of water from water contaminated by pesticides and other agricultural chemicals.





Further Information

To learn more about the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, contact your local, State, or county FSA office or write to the following address:

**USDA FSA Public Affairs Staff
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
STOP 0506
Washington, D.C. 20250-0506**

Information on FSA can also be found on FSA's World Wide Web home page, at
www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm

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